A Simple House Songbirds Love

This reader made more than one of these birdhouses because he was won over by the sound of music.

FOR YEARS, Kevan Judah built birdhouses to welcome whatever birds came along. But that was before a pint-sized vocalist won him over.

"Carolina wrens decided to raise a brood in a birdhouse like this right outside my office window," recalls Kevan, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. "The chalet-style birdhouse I'd put out 2 years before suited it just fine.

"I could see the birds up close—and even with the window closed, I could hear them. Man, can they sing! After that season, I put up another house like it, which attracted another pair."

Kevan's design calls for a 1-1/8-inch entrance hole, but you can experiment with other sizes to attract different birds. (We've included a birdhouse-building chart on page 39 to help.) "Chickadees and wrens both like this type of house, so you never know what kind of bird will move in," Kevan says.

We dressed up our version of the house with a few coats of paint (paint only the outside of the house) and added some precut wooden decorations, which are sold at most craft stores. But if you choose to make the birdhouse from cedar, it's fine to just let your creation weather naturally.

"If you're a cedar lover like me, it saves a lot of painting time," Kevan points out. "It takes about 2 years for it to weather to that beautiful silver color."

Here's What You'll Need...

- ❑ One 4-foot 1-inch x 6-inch rough cedar board
- ❑ 2-inch galvanized finishing nails
- ❑ 1-5/8-inch galvanized deck screws

Recommended Tools...

- ❑ Table saw
- ❑ Power drill

Let's Start Building!

1. Cut the pieces for the birdhouse from a 4-foot 1-inch x 6-inch rough cedar board by following the board layout below left. Cut the roof, front and back pieces first. (The angle between the front and back pieces can be cut on a table saw by setting the miter gauge at 63°, or on a radial arm saw by setting the angle at 27°.) Then cut the rest of the pieces to size.

2. Bore an entrance hole in the front piece using a spade bit. Drill until the tip of the bit comes through the other side, then flip the board and finish the hole.

3. Drill a 1/2-inch hole near the top of the back for ventilation or for hanging. (This house can either be hung from the back or the long side. However, if mounting from the side, you will need a spacer board between the house and the surface it's being mounted to because of the overhanging roof.) If hanging from the back, we recommend adding another vent hole near the top of the long side.

4. Drill four 1/4-inch drainage holes in the floor.

5. Assemble the house with 2-inch finishing nails. Predrill the holes to prevent the wood from splitting. Fasten the sides to the back first, then add the front before attaching the floor.

6. Position the long section of the roof so its top edge is flush with the front and back peaks. Attach it to the front and back pieces with two 1-5/8-inch deck screws (drill pilot holes first). When it's time to clean out the birdhouse after nesting season, just remove the screws and take the roof section off.

7. Attach the short roof piece so it overlaps the long roof piece. Fasten it to the *front and back pieces* (not the long roof section or you will not be able to open the cleanout) with 2-inch finishing nails.

That's it—your birdhouse is ready to decorate or mount, and you're ready to face the music!